

“Is there a fee for Early Intervention (EI) services?”

Yes, some families will pay a fee depending on their family size and income. Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law that provides EI services and allows fees to be collected from families.

“I thought services were free.”

Part C of IDEA requires that some Early Intervention (EI) activities are free.

Those activities include:

- **Child find** (outreach to find children who might be eligible for EI).
- **Evaluation and assessment** (to determine if a child is eligible for EI).
- **Service coordination** (activities that find resources for families).
- **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** development and their reviews.
- **Family rights** (known as procedural safeguards and due process).

“How will I know if I need to pay a fee”

The EI program will ask you to provide information about your family size, income and insurance when you enter the program and again annually.

Based on your family size and income, the EI program matches this information into one of five fee categories based on the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG).

“What if I choose not to give information about my income or health insurance?”

Families have the right not to provide information about their income or allow the program to bill their health insurance. If you choose not to provide income information or allow the program to bill your insurance you will be assessed the highest fee amount.

You will need to provide proof of your income by providing one of the following to your EI service provider:

- Most recent tax return or
- Most recent W2(s) and/or 1099(s) or
- Last two (2) consecutive pay stubs/advice
- If none of the above is available, you can provide a written statement of salary or wages that documents the amount and how often you are paid (e.g. weekly, monthly) from your employer. The statement must include company/employer name, address, phone number and supervisor/human resource staff signature.

This information is confidential. It is not available to any other program (public or private) without your written permission. The following are the fee categories based on a family’s income level:

Category A: Families whose size and income are below 300% of the FPIG, have a child on any form of MassHealth, or have a foster child in their care will not pay a fee.

Category B: Families whose size and income are between 301% and 400% of the FPIG will pay a fee of \$250 per year. A family will not pay more than \$375 a year.

Category C: Families whose size and income are between 401% and 550% of the FPIG will pay a fee of \$500 per year. A family will not pay more than \$750 a year.

Category D: Families whose size and income are between 551% and 750% of the FPIG will pay a fee of \$900 per year. A family will not pay more than \$1,350 a year.

Category E: Families whose size and income are above 750% of the FPIG will pay a fee of \$1,500. A family will not pay more than \$2,250 a year.

IMPORTANT: These are annual fees. If your child is eligible for 6 months, you will be billed half the fee for the first 6 months. If your child continues to be eligible, you will be billed for the other half.

“What if I move or transfer to another Early Intervention Program?”

You will need to provide information about your family’s size, income and insurance to the new program. You should tell the new program that you have already paid the fee.

Can I receive a refund if I decide to withdraw from the EI program?

The fee is not refundable.

What if I can't afford the fee?

A family may not be denied Early Intervention services based on an inability to pay the fee. You may ask for an exemption from the fee by completing a Family Fee Exemption Request Form. A family may ask for an exemption if out-of-pocket medical expenses or losses due to disaster (e.g. fire, flood, tornado) during the past twelve (12) months meets or exceeds 15% of a family's gross income. The DPH will notify you in writing once a determination has been made, typically within 10 calendar days.

A family may ask for a redetermination of their fee any time there is a change in family size or income.

If a family falls behind more than 60 days in payment(s), the EI program may suspend IFSP services (e.g. home visits, child groups) until the account is paid.

"I thought my insurance covered the cost for Early Intervention services."

Some health insurance plans, including MassHealth, fully cover Early Intervention services while others do not. Collecting fees is necessary to ensure that all eligible children have access to services.

"My child is eligible for 6 months or less. Will the fee be adjusted?"

Yes, the fee will be adjusted if your child does not have an IFSP written for a full year.

- 0-3 full months enrollment – family pays 25% of the assigned fee.
- 4-6 full months enrollment – family pays 50% of the assigned fee.
- 7-9 full months enrollment – family pays 75% of the assigned fee.
- 10-12 full months enrollment – family pays full fee.

Questions or Concerns?

The Program Director at your Early Intervention program should be able to answer any questions you have about the fee or Early Intervention services.

You can also contact Mary Dennehy-Colorusso from the Department of Public Health, Early Intervention Services, at (978) 851-7261 or TTY (978) 851-0829.

Your Early Intervention Program is:

MASSACHUSETTS EARLY INTERVENTION ANNUAL FEE

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